

San Joaquin Kit Fox: Track Identification

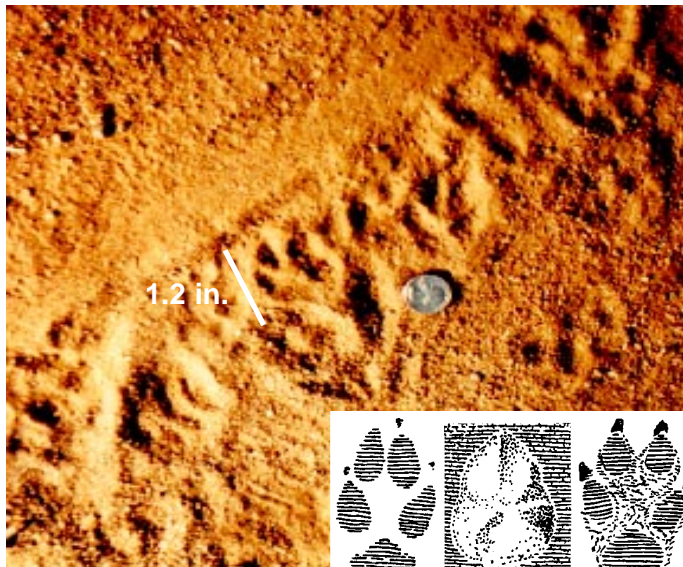


Photo: Rosalie Faubion (USBR)

dust

sand

mud or snow

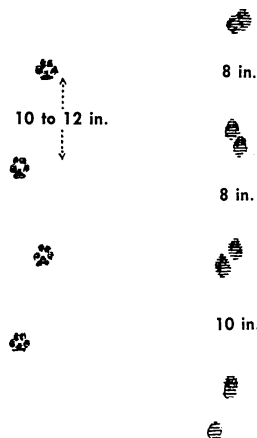
The pads of the San Joaquin Kit Fox are small (1.2 in.) in relation to other canids. Their tracks may vary in size and clarity on different surfaces (see above), and it can only be identified by the size of the footprint as a whole and the track pattern in general (see back).



California Department of Pesticide Regulation
Endangered Species Project

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Track patterns: a comparison

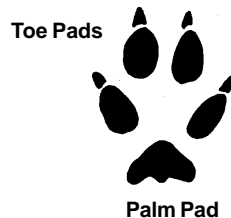


Gray Fox

Kit Fox

The gait (stride) of the Kit Fox is relatively short (8-10 inches), whereas other species, for instance the Gray Fox, have a longer stride, typically over 10 inches.

Track elements



Differentiating Kit Foxes from other small carnivores can be difficult. Tracks of Red Fox, Gray Fox and domestic house cat can be mistaken for Kit Fox.

However, there are some key differences among them: Red Foxes leave the largest track imprints of them all, with a distinct ridge across the palm pad. Gray Foxes have little fur evident on their tracks, whereas Kit Foxes are well furred, especially on the palm pad. One of

the most useful diagnostic features of the Gray Fox track is the lobed posterior border of the palm pad, whereas the Kit Fox has an indistinct palm pad.

In general, all three foxes can be differentiated from domestic cats by examining the shape of the track and the relative palm pad size. Fox tracks are oval, whereas cat tracks are more round. Cat palm pads are usually much larger relative to each toe pad than are fox palm pads. Almost three toe pads would fit into the palm pad of a domestic cat, but usually one or two would fit into the palm pad of a fox.